

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for evaluating a set of credentials comprising
5 at least one group credential comprising:
 - ascertaining at least one first trust rating within at least one of said credentials within said set of credentials including said group credential, wherein each of said first trust ratings is associated with a level of confidence in
 - 10 information being certified within the respective credential;
 - determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating; and
 - 15 providing a signal in the event said second trust rating satisfies predetermined criteria.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said providing step includes the step of comparing said second trust rating to a
20 predetermined trust rating threshold and wherein said predetermined criteria comprises said predetermined trust rating threshold.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein said determining step
25 comprises the step of assigning said second trust rating equal to the lowest trust rating among the first trust ratings of the respective credentials within a single certification path.
- 30 4. The method of claim 1 further including, in the event said set of credentials forms a plurality of certification

paths having at least one credential in each of said paths,
the steps of:

5 determining for each of said plurality of certification
paths a third trust rating equal to the lowest trust rating
in the credentials of the respective certification path; and
assigning said second trust rating equal to the highest
trust rating of said third trust ratings.

10 5. The method of claim 4 wherein said providing step
includes the step of comparing said second trust rating to
said predetermined criteria.

15 6. The method of claim 1 wherein said signal comprises an
indication that access to a resource should be granted.

7. The method of claim 6 further including the step of
granting access to said resource in response to said
indication.

20 8. The method of claim 7 wherein said resource comprises a
file on a file server.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein said resource comprises a
web page.

25 10. The method of claim 7 wherein said resource comprises a
secure area.

11. The method of claim 7 wherein said resource comprises a
30 database.

12. The method of claim 3 wherein said ascertaining step further includes the step of obtaining an identity credential trust rating associated with an identity credential within said certification path.

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13. A system for evaluating a set of credentials including at least one group credential comprising;

 a memory containing an access control program; and
 a processor operative to execute said access control
10 program;

 said access control program comprising:

 program code for ascertaining at least one first trust rating within at least one of said credentials within said set of credentials including said group credential, wherein each of said first trust ratings is associated with a level of confidence in information being certified within the respective credential;

15 program code for determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating; and

20 program code for providing a signal in the event said second trust rating satisfies predetermined criteria.

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14. The system of claim 13 wherein said access control program further includes program code for comparing said second trust rating to a predetermined trust rating threshold and wherein said predetermined criteria comprises
30 said predetermined trust rating threshold.

15. The system of claim 13 wherein said program code for
determining said second trust rating includes program code
for assigning said second trust rating as the lowest trust
rating among the respective credentials within a single
5 certification path.

16. The system of claim 13 wherein said access control
program further includes program code operative in the event
said set of credentials forms plural certification paths
10 for:

determining for each of said plural certification paths
a third trust rating equal to the lowest trust rating in the
credentials within the respective certification path; and

15 assigning said second trust rating equal to the highest
trust rating of said third trust ratings.

17. The system of claim 13 wherein said signal comprises an
indication that access to a resource should be granted.

20 18. A computer program product including a computer
readable medium, said computer readable medium having an
access control program stored thereon, said access control
program for execution on a processor and comprising:

25 program code for ascertaining at least one first trust
rating within at least one credential within a set of
credentials including group credential, wherein each of said
first trust ratings is associated with a level of confidence
in information being certified within the respective
credential;

program code for determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating; and

5 program code for providing a signal in the event said second trust rating satisfies predetermined criteria.

19. A computer data signal, said computer data signal including a computer program for use in evaluating a set of credentials, said computer program comprising:

10 program code for ascertaining at least one first trust rating within at least one credential within said set of credentials, wherein said set of credentials includes a group credential and wherein each of said first trust ratings is associated with a level of confidence in
15 information being certified within the respective credential;

program code for determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating; and

20 program code for providing a signal in the event said second trust rating satisfies predetermined criteria.

25 20. A system for evaluating a set of credentials including at least one group credential comprising;

means for storing an access control program; and
means for executing said access control program out of
said storing means, said access control program including:

30 program code for ascertaining at least one first trust rating within at least one of said credentials within said set of credentials including said group credential, wherein each of said first trust ratings is

associated with a level of confidence in information being certified within the respective credential;

5 program code for determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating; and

program code for providing a signal in the event said second trust rating satisfies predetermined criteria.

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21. A method for evaluating a set of credentials comprising at least one group credential comprising:

ascertaining at least one first trust rating within at least one of said credentials within said set of credentials including said group credential, wherein each of said first trust ratings is associated with a level of confidence in information being certified within the respective credential;

determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating; and

storing said second trust rating for subsequent use.

22. The method of claim 21 further including the step of inserting said second trust rating stored in said storing step in another group credential.

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